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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 2100
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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 001155

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

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LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

The Jerusalem Post reported on the trip to London of three
confidants of PM Benjamin Netanyahu to hold talks with Special U.S.
Middle East envoy George Mitchell, which are expected to focus on

Iran and a looming clash over settlement construction. The Post reported that DM Ehud Barak told reporters that Netanyahu's visit to Washington last week marked the beginning of the dialogue with the new U.S. administration, and that this dialogue would take time and be marked by "peaks and valleys." The daily quoted one senior GOI official as saying that Jerusalem felt that if it made clear to the Americans that it would remove outposts, not build new settlements, not expropriate any Palestinian land, and not give incentives to people to live in the settlements, then the Obama administration would not pressure Israel to stop any building beyond the Green Line, even for natural growth. According to the official, this may, however, be "wishful thinking," as the U.S. is continuing to signal to Israel that its formulation of removing outposts won't be sufficient to stave off calls for a complete settlement freeze.

All media, except the religious ones, led with the police disclosure that the man believed to have killed American-Israeli teen Dana Bennett is a suspected serial killer responsible for at least three other murders over the last 14 years -- and that he also worked for several years as a police informant planted in jail cells to get information from other prisoners.

Major media reported that PM Benjamin Netanyahu canceled his trip to France and Italy, which was scheduled for next week. The media cited assessments that the reason for the cancellation was the PMQs bureau's concern that he would be subjected to criticism on his position on the two-state issue. The media reported that Netanyahu's bureau denied this, citing urgent matters.

Leading media reported that last night police and Civil Administration forces destroyed two huts on an outpost -- Hill 18 (Mitzpe Avihai), near the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba. In addition, a tent was removed from the Federman Farm in the city of Hebron. Leading media reported that yesterday DM Barak told diplomatic correspondents: QA way must be found to clarify to the Americans that there is no direct connection between the outposts and Iran.

The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli defense official as saying yesterday that negotiations with Hamas for Gilad Shalit's release will start at Qsquare oneQ under the direction of the GOIQs new envoy, who will likely be Intelligence Affairs Minister Dan Meridor. The newspaper also reported that Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman is considering deploying an Egyptian delegation to Gaza to serve as a direct intermediary between Israel and Hamas. The delegation will also supervise an agreement between Hamas and Fatah if it is reached.

Major media reported that Jordan is up in arms over a bill proposed by Knesset Member Arie Elad (National Union), which calls for "creating two states on the two banks of the Jordan River, one for the Israelis and one for the Palestinians". The bill is up for debate in the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. The leading news Web site Ynet quoted Petra, Jordan's official news agency, as saying yesterday that Nasser Judeh, the country's FM, summoned the Israeli Ambassador to Amman and demanded the bill be withdrawn. Judeh also took the opportunity to explain to the ambassador that Jordan "believes in establishing an independent and viable Palestinian state on Palestinian soil," a Jordanian Foreign Ministry statement was quoted as saying. "This is a strategic Jordanian interest that comes in line with a two-state solution and the Arab peace initiative," the statement said. A Knesset debate has already taken place on Elad's proposal. Israel Radio reported that in a preliminary vote, 53 Knesset members voted in favor of the proposal, including six Labor Knesset members and five from Kadima. Speaking on Israel Radio, President Shimon Peres angrily said that the Palestinian problem must be solved on Palestinian soil with the Palestinians.

Leading media quoted Minister for Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya'alon said yesterday the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has failed and that "such a process has no chance as long as Palestinians see it as enabling the eradication of Israel." Ya'alon's remarks came during a conference at the Knesset in which Likud MK Tzipi Hotovely and others discussed alternatives to the two-state path, which stands at the center of President Obama's Middle East program. Hotovely said that the conference was intended to "strengthen the hand of the Prime Minister, returning

from Washington after standing firm against President Obama." Makor Rishon-Hatzofe stressed that Likud MKsQ message to Netanyahu is that he should not veer from the partyQs diplomatic line. Ya'alon added that recently "Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said they would never recognize Israel as a Jewish state. This reflects that the Palestinians are striving not for the 1967 borders, but for a state that would be created over Israel's destruction, from the Jordan River to the [Mediterranean] Sea. This also explains why [Yasser] Arafat waged war against us in September 2000 -- to eliminate the two-state idea, which was about to reach fruition," he said. Interior Minister Eli Yishai (Shas) added that "Netanyahu's diplomatic line is appropriate and justified In the end, the Americans will understand us. We must not beautify ourselves to win their affection."

Major media quoted the Lebanese media as saying that last week Lebanese security services arrested a colonel in the Lebanese Army on suspicion of spying for Israel. The newspaper also reported that the ruined main synagogue in central Beirut is due to be renovated in the coming weeks, after an agreement between various religious denominations and permission from the Lebanese government, planning authorities and even Hizbullah. Several dozen Jews still living in Lebanon will fund the project, along with others in the Diaspora.

HaQaretz reported that Likud ministers are holding secret talks with Kadima's Number 2, Knesset Member Shaul Mofaz, to probe whether he would be willing to split from the opposition faction and lead a group of six other Kadima lawmakers to Likud. The newspaper quoted sources in Likud as saying that the disappointment of many senior Kadima figures over chairwoman MK Tzipi Livni's refusal to join the Netanyahu government might make the split a reality.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen .Gabi Ashkenazi told the KnessetQs Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that he is not optimistic regarding WashingtonQs efforts to talk to Tehran. Leading media reported that Ashkenazi told the committee that the job of evacuating West Bank outposts should be delegated to police officers, not IDF soldiers. Maariv quoted Ashkenazi as saying that Hamas is a restraining factor. He also stated that there was an absolute IDF prohibition against beating West Bank civilians in the course of their arrest. Ashkenazi's Knesset appearance follows testimony in military court by the commander of the Kfir infantry brigade, Col. Itai Virob, in which Virob justified hitting Palestinian prisoners under exceptional circumstances. The commander was testifying in the case of 1st Lt. Adam Malul of the Kfir infantry brigade, who was accused of hitting a Palestinian during an arrest on the West Bank.

The Jerusalem Post reported that a Likud official told the daily on Monday that the QNakba LawQ was on its way back to the Cabinet for renewed debate rather than to the Knesset.

The Jerusalem Post mentioned that former U.S. Ambassadors to Israel Sam Lewis, Martin Indyk, and Dan Kurtzer are Qfrequent flyersQ to the country.

11. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

11I. "Welcome to Realistan"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (5/27): Q[President ObamaQs] foreign policy is directed at a single goal: a strong America as the leader of a stable world order. The key word in his lexicon is interests.... The realistic approach is the key to the meeting between Obama and Netanyahu.... Netanyahu has been quick to adapt to the new world; at the meeting of the Likud Knesset faction on Monday he explained that dealing with Iran is more important than preserving the outposts -- as Obama had explained to him: An outpost in exchange for [the Iranian nuclear reactor of] Natanz. His colleagues reacted with anger, just as they responded to former prime minister Ariel Sharon when he told them the thought that it's possible to keep 3.5 million Palestinians under occupation is a bad thing for Israel.... If he

continues like this, Netanyahu will have to find inner strength and political cunning like Sharon in the inevitable conflict with his Qnatural partnersQ on the right. He's not there yet, and his crucial moment has not arrived. But after his trips to Sharm el-Sheikh and Washington, even Netanyahu is beginning to hum the realist tune.

II. "World War III Has Started"

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (5/27): QToday one has to be deaf, dumb, and blind in order not to understand that the nuclear bomb that exploded on Monday in North Korea also blew up on JerusalemQs No. 3 Kaplan Street, the seat of the Israeli Prime Minister; the North Koreans pay no heed to the Americans ... and Jerusalem still recites that QRoadmapQ and the evacuation of some outpost. The world is evolving in front of our very eyes and Israeli parliamentarians explain with utter seriousness how the Americans will agree to the continuation of Israeli presence in places we occupy in Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank]. On that occasion we might even evacuate some hut.

III. "Expand the West Bank Settlements"

The ultra-Orthodox HamodiQa editorialized (5/27): QPrime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should be encouraged for sharply rejecting the demand by the U.S. Secretary of State, Mrs. Clinton, that construction in Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank] be stopped -- even regarding apartments and rooms as a result of natural growth.... The Palestinians view construction in Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Jerusalem, as illegal. The Arabs view our very existence in the land of our forefathers as QillegalQ..... At least outwardly, the three senior cabinet members -- the Prime Minister, the Defense Minister, and the Foreign Minister -- are endeavoring to conduct a joint policy.... Only a united, cemented government has a good chance to withstand the new winds blowing from the White House.

12. Iran:

Block Quotes:

QLeave Iran to the Iranians "

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (5/27): QA different vision of Iran, not as a one-dimensional fortress of fanatic conservatism, but as an evolving country, a country in political-social-cultural flux, is what characterized the statements of most of the people who participated in two symposiums that were held [this week] by the Center for Iranian Studies in Tel Aviv University.... I emerged from that conference with a sense of lack. As much as we know about Iran, we still donQt know enough. It is an enormous country with a long and unique history of culture and regimes that is replete with surprises and reversals. It is a shame that so many Israelis, said sadly Professor David Menashri, the Director of the Center for Iranian Studies, presumptuously believe they can solve what they refer to as the Iranian problem. ThatQs nonsense. We are too few, too far away, too foreign. The world is trying to influence and to change, but in the end only the Iranians themselves are going to be able to solve the Iranian problem.

CUNNINGHAM